
Or,
The Best VVisdome:

Propounded to the GENTRY of

SUFFOLK,

In A

SERMON

AT IPSWICH.

Prepared for the 9th. of April 1660. the day of
Election of KNIGHTS of the Shire for the afore-said
COUNTY, but Preached the Morning after.

By BENJAMIN BRUNING,
Minister of the Gospel in IPSWICH.

Imprimatur, EDMUND CALAMY.

London, Printed by D. Maxwell, for W. Weekly of Ipswich,
And are to be sold by John Nashell, at the Fountain in
Goldsmiths Row, in Cheap-side, 1660.

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The Best of Villains:
Or,

Printed by the S. E. R. of

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Ad!

SEYMOUR

AT 15291 TA

Constitution of the State of New York, 1794, the day of

Minister of the Gospel in LE SWIC-H.
A. E. V. & A. M. I. N. B. R. O. W. N. I. N. G.

Edmund Calamy.

Goldsmiths Row, in Cheap-side.
And to be sold by John Robins, at the Fountain in
London, Printed by D. Maxwell, for W. Worsley of Ipswich.

To the Right Worshipful, Sir *Henry Felton* Baronet, and *Henry North* Esq;
KNIGHTS of the Shire for the County
 of *SUFFOLK*.

Right Worshipful,



His Sermon lately Preached in your hearing, I now present to your sight and Patronage; not doubting but it will find a benigne eye, where once it met with such an eare. The appointment, and command of the Magistrates of Ipswich made it my Duty, as a Servant to that Incorporation, to prepare a Sermon for the Publick Meeting of the County; which was no sooner Preached, but your Worshipfull selves, together with many other Noble and Worshipful Persons, were pleased to give me a courteous Summons, that you might signifie your favour towards me, and joynt desires of reading the Sermon ye had that day heard; how much I craved your excusing favour, as to Printing, ye

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

I can witness, and my conscience witness, my real heartiness in that request; and so confident was I, that the Noble Ingenuity of Gentlemen (especially such as know my distempers, which unfit me for any work, that tie me to a Chair) would pardon the omission of what is now done, that I had laid by all thoughts of penning this Sermon for the Press, 'till it almost became too late to take them up: which I had not done, had not my Sermon been misreported, and made to speak many things which were never spoken by me in the Pulpit.

My aime was, to follow truth in order to Peace: In this I have the rejoycing, that the testimony of my Conscience affords; though it hath been my unhappiness, in passing between extreams, to meet with blowes on both ears; possibly too much conciseness, if not abruptness, that I was sometimes forced upon in preaching, being crouded up into a strait corner of time, might occasion mistake in some Auditors: So far as this was my fault, or rather my happiness, I have labour'd the amendment, and remove of it, by some amplifications in the Printing; which I have so mannaged,
that

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that the Sermon may be acknowledged by all that were ingenious hearers, to be the same for main substance and purpose which they heard. I know not of a word added, that alters the sence of any thing I delivered, nor do I remember a sentence spoken in the Pulpit that is here left out.

Such as it is, Honoured Sirs, (together with a thankful acknowledgment of the obligations that your favours and civilities have laid upon me) I humbly offer it to ye, as Gentlemen most concerned in that meeting of the Country that gave occasion for the Sermon. If there be any thing in it, that savours of unsound Doctrine, or ignorant zeal, I pray God shew me my mistake; keeping both you, and others in the mean time from erring with me: But what ever is in it of Doctrine according to Godliness, and tending to the real furtherance of purity, and peace; my Prayer shall be, That it may find favour and true acceptance in your eyes and hearts; so shall ye find favour, and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

The Wisdome from above, that we hear of by St. James, is the same that is mentioned

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by our Saviour, as a mother in the Israel of God: Her genuine offspring are but few, but the children that she hath will justifie her: She hath been grossly abused by some that have worn her childrens cloaths, and this hath brought her into so much contempt with many in the world, that instead of abstaining from all appearance of evil, they scorn and abhor the very appearance of that, which the Apostle terms, the power of godliness, and hate the garment that is not spotted with some profaneness.

Evagrius telleth of one Symiones, who being a man of great Wisdome, miscarried in this, that to avoid the danger of vain-glory, he made it his usual practise to personate a fool when he came in company; but is there not a generation of worse contrivers, who behave themselves as if they purposely studied irreligion, and profaneness, that they may make sure to escape the suspicion of hypocrisie? whilst in the mean time, with a sufficiency of confidence, they can condemn all as a brood of hypocrites, that have any thing in them of true Christian zeal, and are of a right, godly, and strict Conversation.

The Lord give ye, and all other worthy Gentlemen,

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citizens, to quit your selves like men and Christians, in a faithful and courageous owning of that wisdom that is truly pure: and among other services that lye upon your hands, to use your best endeavours to rebuke and frown to death that spirit of profaneness, that, with too much daring boldness, lifts up his head in the land. Let all the world see that honourable Birth and Extract, that principles of Loyalty, Legality, and civil order, are far from being inconsistencies with the most attaineable heights of heavenly-minded Christianity, of holy zeal for God, and through reformation. Be lively patterns of it in your own Persons and Families, and vigorous promoters of it in others. Such Friends and Champions of pure wisdom will loose nothing by it; for she promotes them that exalt her, and will bring to honour them that embrace her; to the heads of such she gives an Ornament of Grace, and will deliver to them a Crown of Glory, Prov. 4.8,9.

Ye have had time enough, worthy Patriots, to consider and lay to heart the miserable convulsions of your beloved Native Country, the woful jeopardies we have been exposed to in all that is
dear

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dear to us, as Christians, and men. Ye have now, amongst other Honourable and Worshipful Persons, a large opportunity, by the miraculous Providence of God, put into your hands for healing the breaches, and setting the foundations of the Land : and blessed be God, that we can now say, We have a Parliament that may do us good if they will : Up, and be doing, and the Lord be with you. The difficulties that are before ye cannot be inconsiderable ; ye have a skein of Silk in hand, to bring to rights, of which I may truly say, That it hath been the work of divers years past to perplex, and ruffle it ; if any thing be done to purpose, the wisdom that must guide ye must come from above ; lift up your voices for it, that ye may understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea, every good path.

O let it not be out of your thoughts, that the eyes of God, Angels, and Men, and of your own consciences are intent upon ye ; think often on us your poor Country men, who are full of expectations, waiting to see what God the Lord will do for us, by means of your wisdom, faithfulness, and courage ; and let me take the boldness to put you in remembrance, that ye are now the Stewards of
God

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God for us ; and that it concerns ye, as ye love your own Souls, so to mannage all your Parliamentary actions, as if ye were assured at the instant of the Parliaments dissolution to be summoned by the most High, to give an account of your Stewardship. The Lord give ye a right understanding of the Times, to know what ought to be done in all concernments of Church and State. If ye know these things, happy shall ye and the Nation be if ye do them: Take Hezekiah for an example, 2 Chron. 31. 21. Who, in every work that he began in the service of the House of God, and in the Law, and in the Commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his heart and prospered. That it may be thus with you, it shall be the Prayer ; that it will be thus, it is the hope,

Right Worshipful,

Of

Your Humbly Devoted to serve Ye
in the Service of Christ.

Benjamin Bruning.

God for us; and that it is our duty to
conform to the will of God, and to
obey his commands. We are to
be holy, as God is holy. We are to
love him with all our heart, mind,
and strength, and to love our
neighbour as ourselves. We are to
keep his commandments, that we
may abide in his love, and that
our love may be perfect.

E R R A T A.

For Judges in Page 45 line 22. read Indies.
The word "Indies" is used in the
original text, and it is so in the
margin of the Bible. It is a
common mistake to read "Judges"
instead of "Indies".

Light & Co.

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Benjamin Franklin



A
SERMON
Preached at
IPSVVICH

Upon occasion of chosing
K NIGHTS of the **SHIRE** for
SUFFOLK:

Jam. 3. 17. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable.

THE Text speaks of a thing that is much spoken of in the world; I would it were as well known, and as much possessed, and that's right Wisdom. The Cynick Philosopher walked the Market-place at noon-day, with a Candle in his hand, and all to seek a

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wise man; wise men were scarce in the judgment of Philosophers, who by the rules of Christian wisdom, were far enough from being truly wise: *Tertullian* terms them, *alicujus sapientia animalia*, a sort of animals wise in their kind, and whilst they professed themselves wise (saith *St. Paul*;) they became fools, *Rom. 1. 22.*

Our Apostle *James* in the 13th verse of this 3d Chapt. he makes a search for a wise man, with another manner of Candle in his hand, and that among Christians, in a time of bright Gospel day-light: *Who is a wise man, and endowed with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.* Now because true wisdom was so scarce, and its counterfeit so common, and consequently so hard to convince a man that wants wisdom, that he is unwise; the Apostle is forced to distinguish between wisdom, and wisdom, wisdom that is not, and wisdom that is from above; *the wisdom that is not from above is earthly, sensual, and devilish, verse 15th.* good for nothing, but to breed envy, strife, confusion, and every evil work, as is intimated, *verse 16.* Oh! how many wise men would there be in the world, were it not for a But in the 17th verse, concerning another kind of wisdom, *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easily to be intreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy.*

The whole verse you see is a description of true wisdom, by an enumeration of its properties; I must stop

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stop at the two first, *first pure*, then *peaceable*, *another Copie, wisdom from above*, that is the thing described. There is a wild wisdom, as common as the high-way, it growes in the hedg-rows of the world; but this is only to be found in the Garden of the Lord, and it is *flos inversus*, a flower of admirable fragrantcy, that hath its root in heaven, it is *from above*.

But what is meant by wisdom from above? 'tis not needful that I use many words about it; the strict definition of wisdom, as distinct from prudence, given by Philosophers, and School-men in their Ethical discourses, it don't much concern my Text, nor shall I trouble you with it; and for the various acceptations of wisdom in the Book of God, it might be worth your time to hear them, had I liberty of time to speak them. In this place 'tis evident enough, that we are not to conceive of wisdom, as distinct from prudence, but as including, yea, mainly intending it. I may term it, *A Gift of God that inhables men to a right judgment, and dictates to them such action as is according to the revealed Will of God*: God's revealed Will, or the Scripture, which our Saviour in one of his Quotations calls by the name of *Wisdom*. (Luke 11. 49. *Therefore said the Wisdom of God, that is the Scripture,*) this may be termed, *sapientia docens* teaching wisdom; but then there is the gift or grace of wisdom that rules the judgments, and actions of men, according to the rule of the word, this may be termed *sapientia utens*, using or practising wisdom. Now this wisdom from
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above,

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above, 'tis first pure, then peaceable; *ἄνω, ἁγνή, καθαρή, εἰρηνική*; pure, peaceable; there is the properties of wisdom in the matter of them: *πρῶτον ἁγνότης*, first then; there is the order of them; 'tis pure, 'tis peaceable, 'tis first pure, then peaceable.

Wisdome from above is pure; the only account I shall give of this, shall be by some instances of rules, and principles tending to purity, which are the dictates of wisdom from above, contrary to the rules, and principles of carnal wisdom.

The first shall be this, *Divine institution is the only pure rule of religious worship*; what God commands not in matter of worship, he forbids; and consequently, all uncommanded worship is impure worship, and the wisdom that dictates it impure wisdom. As the first Commandment concerns the right object of worship, so, the second, the right manner of it; which according to known and received rules for understanding the Commandments, condemns all manner of corrupt worship, under the express mention of one more notorious kind of it, namely the worshiping of God before an Idol. The Commandment begins thus, *Thou shalt not make to thy self*. So much as there is in God's worship of mans device, and making, so much there is of impurity in it; and as there is no Commandment; that the appearing wisdom of man is more prone to make bold with than this; so the God of Heaven hath taken care to fence it accordingly against abuse: Here it is that the Lord represents himself a jealous God, jealousy saith Solomon, is the rage of a man, what is jealousy then

then in God? and jealousy you know will not only be stir'd by gross uncleanness, but by wanton dalliances. And because the wisdom of man is so apt to judge its own contrivances in God's worship a fruit of love to him, the Lord names it a *hating of him*. As much as you make of your right eyes, none of you can be so tender of them, as God is of his own prescriptions in his worship.

Whilst the Lord in the childhood of his Church, prescribed a numerous multitude of Ceremonies, for this reason among others (as is thought by Divines) that they might be the less under temptation to use their own devisings; during this state of the Church, they that list may easily observe how severely the Lord held his people to his own prescriptions. Were there then any meer positive institutions mingled in God's worship, with Gods approbation, unless such as had divine authority for them, either by an express word, or clear consequence from it, or extraordinary inspiration, of extraordinary persons? If once I be convinced that there were, I shall be ready to acknowledge my present mistake; but sure enough, had a Priest under the law devised so much as one religious vestment more than God prescribed, he would have had little thank for it. 'Tis very observable in some Chapters of the Mosaical law, that where you have a punctual narration of God's prescriptions in one part of the Chapter, you shall have a rehearsal in the other part of the Chapter, of all over again as practised by *Moses* and *Aaron*. Hereby the Lord shews how strictly he stands upon his Sacred Authority,

in prescribing the manner of his own worship: and this I humbly conceive is the instruction that the Lord would have us learn from it. *Moses* his rule was the pattern he saw in the Mount, and not the mould of his own brain.

And if the distinction of the substantials of worship, and ceremonious additions to it, would salve the matter; *Nadab* and *Abihu* might have come off better with their strange fire, and the Scribes and Pharisees would not have deserved so much rebuke, for their religious washing before meat. The sin of *Nadab* and *Abihu* was not that they offered incense to a strange God, nor did they presume so far as to offer strange incense to the true God, or the right incense upon a strange Altar; they only offered strange fire before the Lord, such fire, saith the Text, *As the Lord commanded them not*, Levit. 10. verse 1. when the Lord gave them fire from Heaven, he did not in so many words forbid the use of any other fire, that was to be understood by his not commanding it; nor do we find that they made use of other fire more than once, or that they intended a common trade of it, and wholly to disuse that which came from Heaven; but strange fire at a time they used, and behold the event of it, verse 2. *There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them:* and what account doth *Moses* give of this verse 3. *This is that the Lord spake; I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me,* as much as to say, he will have his authority acknowledged in what he prescribes in his worship. And as for religious washing before meat, some would have thought that

that the practise of such a Ceremony upon the account of humane tradition, might have been overlooked in an age, when so many legal washings and cleanings were in use by God's appointment; but this would not excuse it, when the Scribes and Pharisees came to our Saviour, *Mat. 15.* at the beginning, with this cauil, *Why do thy Disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders, in not washing their hands when they eat bread.* Our Saviours reply was, *verse 3.* *Why do you transgress the Commandment of God by your tradition?* If any think that these words of Christ have respect only to what follows concerning the consecrated gift, by which they violated the fifth Commandment, I must crave leave to dissent from them. If the third verse be not a reply to the second, then is there no answer at all made to it; and besides what appears plainly in the surface of the words, the second and third verses compared together; let me ask, did Christ approve that religious washing of hands, or not; if he approved it, why did not his Disciples practise it? or why did he not excuse their omission of it? or if they practised it, why did he not doe them right, when they were accused for not doing it? It is evident enough that whilst they objected against Christs Disciples their tradition; Christ taxeth them for transgressing the Commandments of God by following that tradition. But what Commandment will some say was it, that was hereby transgressed? It is most certain, what ever sin is committed, there is a breach made upon some Commandment of the moral law: now the religious washing before meat,

used.

used by the Scribes and Pharisees, and the strange fire of *Nadab*, and *Abihu*, I can apprehend them no otherwise, than as transgressions of the second Commandment, where the Lord hath said, *Thou shalt not make to thy self*. If any think I stretch the sense of the Commandment further then God intended it, let them but consider, that our Lord Jesus in his Sermon upon the Mount, makes the least degree of anger, without just cause, a breach of the sixth Commandment, *Thou shalt not do no murder*; and a wanton glance of the eye, a breach of the seventh, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*: now why a meere institution in the worship of God, may not be looked upon as a breach of the second, as well an angry thought, a breach of the sixth, or a wanton look, of the seventh Commandment, I see no reason. Therefore if any shall say, that God have left the Christian Church to a greater liberty in prescribing to its self, as to the manner of God's worship, then he did the Jewish Church; I shall not be induced to their opinion, unless they can produce a Divine Authority for such a grant of liberty, or make it appear that the second Commandment is of less force now than formerly, and antiquated as to some of its morality.

Bellarmino in his dispute about Ceremonies, hath such words as these, *Omnes nostra Ceremonia indicantur à Deo in genere*, God hath given a general grant for all our Ceremonies, and how doth he prove it? first saith he, the Church is to see, that all things be done decently, and in order: Secondly,

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2. We are commanded to *obey them that are set over us*. How zealously have I heard some urge these Scriptures for Ceremonies of humane device in the Worship of God? I would they would consider, that in this matter they serve Bellarmine's turn, as well as theirs: and if we will take up these Scriptures at such a randome of sense, whither is it almost that they may not lead us? If any think I speak this as a despiser of Church-goverment, they do me wrong; I could wish for an hours time, to lament the want of it: with all reverence I acknowledg the Authority of the Church, as far as may be without prejudice to Christ's Authority. There are circumstances necessary conversant about worship, as natural or civil means, and helps to it: many such circumstances concerning time, place, behaviour and the like, must be attended to, and are of a nature farr different from meer instituted ceremonies: Now the institutions of Christ that concern his Worship and Ordinances, are many and weighty; and when the Church provides that Christ's institutions be observed decently, and orderly with due respects to due circumstances, this to be sure is a due exercise of Church-authority: aye, and a great work to see this well done; but that the Church hath power to contrive a decency of worship, by mingling with it Religious Rites, that Christ never instituted; here I must confess my self unsatisfied. *Salmeron* the Jesuite grants, that every rite or ceremony, used as religious in God's Worship, must have a divine authority for it, or it is unlawfull; but withall affirms

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that the ceremonies of their Church, are of divine authority, being appointed by the authority of the Holy Ghost in the Church. Concerning the latter assertion, all Protestants will fall out with the Jesu-ite: let us be but as honest as the Jesu-ite in the former, and I hope we are all agreed in the matter of God's Worship. And truly it cannot enter my thoughts that any Church, or Church-members will fare ever the worse at last, for keeping close to their Bibles in the Worship of God. That sort of persons that formerly were called *non-conformists*, such as had due loyalty to their Prince, respect to Superiours, and withall kept clear of leperation: they are a sort of persons I shall for ever reverence, and possibly their cause, will be found as good as *theirs*, who most despise them, when causes shall be tryed in that Court where the Word of God shall be the rule of Judgment. I have done with this, though I am sensible I have been too short upon it, it being a matter so much in controversy, yet I wish I could have been shorter, as I must be upon the rest.

2. In the second place, take this as another dictate of wisdom from above, in order to purity. *The pure rule of Gods revealed Will, is as much violated by subtraction in matter of worship as by addition, & as much by impure Doctrine, as by impure Worship.* Deutr. 4. 2. The Spirit of God doth not say, rather of the two, subtract, then add; no, but *ye shall not add to the Word which I Command you, neither shall ye diminish from it.* And as inclinations to false worship

This is called a spirit of *Whoredom*; for the Apostle bid the Corinthians to beware of false Doctrine; *That he might present them to Christ, as a chaste Virgin.* 2 Cor. 11. at the beginning. Now look upon the carriage of many persons, you shall find them very angry with the Papists for their seven Sacraments, and in the mean time, they are for none at all. Some cannot endure one that useth the cross in Baptisme, but can very contentedly bear another that useth no Baptisme. Singing of Service how will they cry out of it? But the not singing of Psalmes, thats so farr from being a fault, that 'tis rather a piece of Religion with them. Should they hear one plead for Preaching in a Surplice, they would think him little better then a heathen, and can have no reserve of charity for him: But let an other cry down all publick Preaching and Ministry; yea possibly if into the bargain, he denieth the Deity and Satisfaction of Christ; yet they think it fit he should have favour, and be countenanced with Toleration.

Now with such men as these, 'tis worse to pin a bauble upon the sleeve of Religion, then to cut off an arm of it; yea it may be then to chop off the head of it. Where is the wisdom of these Men? Have they any from *above*? If they have, let them labour to awaken it, and to use it better.

3. *The purest Worship and purest Doctrine, are of no use to impure Worshippers and impure Practisers;* that's an other dictate of wisdom from *above*, as pure.

To them that are defiled, (saith the Appostle) is nothing pure. 1 Tit. 15. Gods pure institutions, in Isaiah,

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by means of impure worshipers, were reckoned upon as *vain oblations*, as *swines blood*, as *the cutting off a dogs head*. There are many souls now in Hell amongst unclean Devils, that went thither, from under pure ordinances. Nor is it meer outward purity that will salve the business. *Fam. 4. 8.* the Apostle telling what must be done in order to drawing nigh to God; *Cleanse your hands ye sinners*, (saith he) that must be done; but that's not all, *Purifie your hearts ye double-minded*; that must not be forgotten. Meer Formalities, and outside sanctities come to no more, then if men should say in complement, doth God call for worship; wee'l wash our hands and waite upon it: but let us not think that God will be so put off.

Nor will pure doctrine avail any thing, to an impure Practiser. No real benefit by the *Mystery of Faith*, unless it be kept in a *pure Conscience*. Some are of this humour, that if they conceit that their practise be good, they don't much regard what their Opinions be. Others againe, if they apprehend that they are Orthodox in judgment, they think themselves good Christians whatever their lives be. But wisdome from above will teach us, that a Heterodox conversation will carry an Orthodox judgment to hell. Judas was once an Orthodox preacher, and we don't find that ever he turn'd heretick. *If ye know these things*, saith Christ, what then, are ye happy? *Yes, if ye do them*, but not upon other termes. *John 13. 17.*

4. *Pure Religion, in its fullest latitude, and strictest severities, is to be taken up and embraced, and that for Religions sake.* This is an other Dictate of wisdom from above, in order to purity. Such wisdom taught David, *to have respect to all Gods Commandments*, Psal. 119. 6. And St. James to say, *he that offends in one point, is that lives in the wilful breach and neglect of any one Commandment, he is guilty of all*, James 2. 10. and disallows all but one and another.

One part of Gods Law cometh from above, as well as another, and it would be strange if wisdom from above should not embrace all, when Religion ends with the first table, or begins with the second, that man is a fool in his Religion. When God delivered the Tables of the Law to Moses, did he put one Table into one hand, and the other into an other hand, and bid him carry them unto the people, that they might take their choise which of them they would keep? No such thing, I am sure. Is Christ divided, saith the Apostle? And is the Law of God divided, may I say? The woman that was for the dividing the child, was not the true mother of it. And they that are for a mangled, divided Law, 'tis a sign they never had any thing of Gods Law in their hearts. Oh! how happy were it, if the blustering zeal of this age, for the tenent of universal redemption, were turn'd into a Godly zeal for the practise of universal holiness.

I say a godly zeal; for it is not a complemental correspondency with all the parts of Religion that will serve the turn; wisdom from above aimeth at the strictest

pains, for by keeping them I have learned to keep them better. (There are too many that take up Religion, as an engine of policy, as a block to take horse at, as a step to preferment, and accordingly they shape it by the mould of the times they live in, and will change the fashion of it as the times change. Believe it, there will be a round reckoning for such an abuse of Religion. *Fenabel* might have murder'd *Naboth* at a cheaper rate, had she done it without a fact. Do the Scribes and Pharisees, whilst they *despise* *Widows houses*, make long prayer for a pretence? What do they get by such Prayer? they shall therefore receive the greater damnation, *Mat. 23. 14.* You may take this for a truth, to make use of Religion in policy, for worldly advantage sake, is the way to be damned with a vengeance for religious sake. And this ushers in,

5. A fifth Dictate of Wisdome from above as pure, *Godly sincerity*, and plain-hearted integrity, & the best policy. Our rejoicing in this (saith the Apostle) the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. *2. Cor. 1. 12.* He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, *Prov. 10. 9.* As for *Machiavels* rules, concerning the crafty management of conscience, they that will not be perswaded, but that his wisdom is better then *Pauls*, and *Solomons*, may make tryal of it if they please, till they see what is to be gotten by it. As for wretched, carnal, treacherous policy, Were there no other wisdom, I should think it a real mercy

cy to be a born-fool. I may speak the less of this, because God hath done so much of late years for the illustration and proof of it. Such a Politician was certainly a fool twenty years ago; but he that drives that trade now, hee's a mad-man as well as a foole.

That meer worldly policy is good for nothing but to teach men to be *necis sua artifices*, to catch themselves in traps of their own making, and to ruine themselves artificially; there's nothing more evident; we have as much reason to believe it, as if God had spoken it by an audible voice from Heaven. *David* was a King, and Kings must have their lifeguards; what was it that *David* chose for his main guard? it was integrity and uprightness, *Let integrity and uprightness preserve me*, Psal. 25. 21. We are now in hope of a Parliament; what violent usages our Parliaments have met with, I need not tell you. The Lord send us a Parliament of so much wisdom from above, As to say with *David*, let integrity and uprightness preserve us. This shall suffice concerning the first property of wisdom, 'tis pure. I pass to the second; Wisdom from above, 'tis peaceable. Good men are sometimes called by our Saviour, *Children of Wisdom*, and sometimes *Sons of Peace*; put both together, and they come to this much, *Wisdomes children are Sons of Peace*.

In handling this, I shall take the same course I did in the former, propounding several dictates of Wisdom from above in order to Peace.

1. The first shall be this; *A bad man may be a lawfull Magistrate.* That principle *Dominium fundatur in gratia*, Dominion is founded in grace; 'tis well known whose it is, and what havock the *Holineffes* of *Rome* have made in the World by means of it. When *Bellarmino*, and others of the same fraternity cry out of Lutheran Doctrine, as that that spoiles Princes of their just Authority, and releaseth subjects from due allegiance: they make me thinke of him, that when he had robbed a house, made an escape by crying out with the loudest, *stop the Thief, stop the Thief.* If any amongst us fancy it a Protestant doctrine, that dominion is founded in grace; they betray their ignorance of the controversial writings; that have been between Papists and Protestants, ever since the Reformation. The more is the pity, that so many have taken it up of late, whilst they condemn almost all the world besides themselves, as Antichristian. My Bretheren, I am not unsensible what a blessing it is to a people to have over them a godly Magistracy: this we are to pray for, and in our places to endeavour, so farr as our lawful priviledg lyeth in liberty of chusing, duty to God, and to our Country, to our wives and children, and to our selves; oblige us to chuse amongst men duely fitted for Government, as *good* men as we can. But now to hold that no person can have a civil right to rule and government, unless he be a godly Person, 'tis a principle (notwithstanding the plausible sound of it) hot enough to set all the world on fire. If this be received as a truth, that Saints as such, and

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only such, have right to rule over others; it must needs follow, that all that think themselves to be Saints, will think withall, that the right is theirs; and consequently so many sects and factions as there be in the world, so many claimes will be laid to Dominion.

And should it come to this, what can reasonably be expected, but confused Massacres, and spilling of blood? Should any get a superiority by the help of this principle, if they mean to be quiet in their dominion, they had need make a law to forbid others to be of their judgment, in that particular; unles they'l promise to be of their humor in every thing else.

But Wisdom from above, as appears by the rule of it, provides better for the peace of the world. Throughout the old Testament, whilst you meet with too great a store of ungodly Kings and Governors, you find not one instance, where Subjects were freed from allegiance upon that score. The contrary is apparent enough: what had become of *Saul*, when he passed by *David* in the cave, had *David* been infected with such a principle, that a bad man can not be a lawfull Magistrate. *Psal. 82. 1. God judgeth amongst the Gods. The Gods*, that is, the Magistrates. Some would take it for granted, that these were good men that were thus called: Marke what follows; immediately, *v. 2. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the Persons of the wicked?* In the new Testament, let it be minded, what severe charges the Apostles laid upon Christians for subjection, and obedience.

dience to civil Magistrates, and withall, let it be considered, what manner of Magistrates were then in the world. 1 Tim. 2. at the beginning, the Apostle exhorts, that *Prayers be made for Kings, and such as be in Authority, &c.* Suppose Kings and Governors be bad, as generally they were, when the Apostle wrote that Epistle; yet his advice to Christians, is not to take advantage to chop off their Heads, or banish them their Dominions: No, but to pray that God would make them better. 'Tis true, the unlawfull and sinfull commands of the most lawfull Magistrate must not be done; but then lawfull Governors, must be acknowledged by submission to suffering. Otherwise what thinke we of Martyrdom? 2. What thinke we of some of the primitive Christians, as *Mauritius* a noble Captaine, who together with a great band of Christian Souldiers upon the account of Christianity, were put to death by the command of the Emperör, and suffered it without resistance? According to the principle of some in our times, these were not so much Martyrs, as fools and cowards.

2. Another Dictate from above, in order to peace is this: *Civil Magistracy is Gods ordinance and appointment, for the Vindication and Guardianship of both tables of his Law.* A full discussion of this, with the severall cases that concerne it, would be a long work, and that must not be at this time. Instances concerning Magistrates in their dealings about Religion for the safeguard and vindication of it, we have them in the old Testament so clear and plentifull,

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that I may the more freely gain a little time by not naming them. If any object, that Magistrates then were types of Christ in such actions, I see no reason, why they should be look't upon as types of Christ in matters of *Religion*, belonging to the first Table, more then in matters of *Justice* belonging to the second Table. And when the Jewish nation had Governors over them, which imployed their Authority for the furtherance of Religion, and laid restraint upon the promoters of false Worship, and false Doctrine, was it their priviledg and happiness, or was it otherwise? If it be clear that it was their great priviledg, by what logick shall we conclude it a priviledge of gospel times, to be freed from such an exercise of Authority?

Now for the new Testament it must be granted, that it affordeth no instances of any Magistrates that used their authority in the behalf of Christian Religion: and no wonder, for where were there any Christian Magistrates in the world, before the writings of the new Testament were finished? But what saith the Apostle? *1 Tim. 2, 1, 2. Let prayers be made for Kings and all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet, and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. Godliness concerns the first Table, Honesty the second.* They are both mentioned heer with respect had to the office of the civil Magistrate. 'Tis true, may some say, if any will be godly, the Magistrate is to provide that they may live peaceably and quietly. But is this all that concerns the Magistrate, in respect had to godliness? If any be of that mind.

mind, I would have such consider, that *godliness* and *honesty* are here coupled together in reference to the Magistrate. And sure enough, 'tis not barely the Magistrates duty to provide that men may live *quietly*, if they will be *honest*; but likewise to make lawes about it, and to see to the execution of them; why then is he not to do the like about *godliness*, which is the concernment of the first Table? And that which comes yet closer to my purpose; this care of the Magistrate about godliness and honesty, is the means by which a People may come to live peaceably and quietly.

The Grand Scripture that is insisted on, for binding up the Authority of the Civil Magistrate from laying restraint upon Hereticks, is the parable of the Tares mingled with the good Seed, *Mat. 13.* from the 24. to the 30th verse. As far as I can apprehend, the Patrons of unbounded Toleration are quite beside our Saviours purpose in the parable, which was to quiet the hearts of real Christians in the providence of God, laying out their lot and portion in this world amidst ungodly men: This may give them occasion of much exercise and trouble; but they must be content with it. And should any in a froward discontent at this carriage of divine providence, begin to meditate the extirpation of the wicked of the World, that so the Saints may have it to themselves in possession, and be the only Lords of it, the scope of the whole parable will lye full in their way, and particularly the admonition of the 30th. verse. *Let both grow together until the Harvest*; The reason of which

which we have in the verse before, *least whilst ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them.* A reason that hath a world of reason in it: for should men of such spirits and principles as the Germane Anabaptists were of, whom *Luther* termed, *vesanos sanctos*, the mad Saints, should such (I say) ever gain an opportunity for plucking up (as they pretend) the Tares, sure enough 'twould be a woful day for most of the Wheat, that God hath in the World. But if the parable be pleaded, as an Argument against coercive power towards Hereticks, in laying just restraints upon them; I see no reason why the drunkards and the adulterers plea for liberty and exemption from the Magistrates Power, should not upon the account of this parable be every whit as good. I pray, give Christ leave to expound his own parable, and he will tell you, that by the *Tares* he intends *the children of the wicked one.* v. 18. *All things that offend, and do iniquity.* v. 41. The Tares and Wheat in this parable are they that shall divide the whole World at the last day. The Tares are they that shall then be bound up in bundles and burnt. Now doth not this concern drunkards and adulterers as much as Hereticks? Unless then men will deny the power of the Magistrate in the concernment of the second Table (which is in effect, a beheading of the whole World, by renouncing all Magistracy) let them be ashamed to urge this parable against his Authority, in the vindication of the first table.

I speak not this as if I thought that Church-government were swallow'd up in the Civil Magistrate. I

am not for a *Kaiaoyrania*. The Church of God by Gods appointment and ordinance hath its Government proper to it, distinct from Civil Government: And both of them have their work, though different work, about Religion. And if duly discharged, no great fear but peace will flourish. That any should commend a full Toleration in Religion upon the account of peace and peacemaking, 'tis much such a riddle to me as if one should undertake to keep a house from burning by putting fire to it. I know unbounded Toleration, *sub nomine libertatis prophetandi* under the goodly name of liberty of prophesie, hath been highly commended to the World, as a rare expedient for peace. This was done by the Remonstrants, a sort of men that created sufficient trouble to the Church. But they that will read Learned *Vedelius, de arcanis Arminianismi*, will find how effectually he deals with Princes and Magistrates to convince them of the destructiveness of such Toleration to the Peace of Church and State whereever it obtains. *Odia religionum sunt acerbissima*, 'twas ever a truth, and will be to the worlds end. No hatred to compare with such as is founded in diversities of Religion. What woful experience have we had of it, as the miserable effect of our late Tolerations? We have learn't that not *libertas prophetandi* according to the Remonstrants, but *libertas perditionis* according to St. *Austin*, is Latine for Toleration.

3. Another Dictate of Wisdome from above in order to Peace is this. *What may be left at liberty with*

without apparent prejudice to purity, peace, and order; that ought to be so left for peace sake. Rigorous impositions in these cases are unreasonable severities; and if the forbearing of one another in love, required in the 4th. to the Ephes. 2.v. may not take place here, I cannot apprehend to what purpose that precept is in our Bible. I have already intimated some circumstances, necessary to be attended to as natural or civil helps to worship; and 'tis the duty of the Church, as to take care for the observation of Christs Ordinances, so to see this done with a due respect to due circumstances. 'Tis not my intention now to unsay what I have said, but to confirm and clear it. There are circumstances, I say, about Gods Worship which are commanded in general by God himself, either in Scripture or Nature: but *pro hic & Nunc* are left by him undetermined, and committed to humane determination.

I shall give an instance or two. And first for the circumstance of *time* (where by the way, I do not at all intend the Lords day or Christian Sabbath; that I take to be of another nature) but there are circumstances of time, that are left to humane determination. Such as are in authority by Gods command, are to see that his *publick worship* be observ'd in due season. But whether the publick Assemblies shall be, at eight, or nine, or ten of the Clock, &c. the determination of this is left to the Wisdom of Authority. And necessary it is, that some time be determined: for if all be left at liberty, some to take one hour, others another, what inevitable confusion would follow upon this?

this: Again, the Lord hath given a general rule for dayes of *Humiliation* and *Thanksgiving*, but for the determination of these services, to this or that particular day, is left to the Wisdome of Authority. So for the circumstance of *place*, when God requires his publick worship, to be sure, it must be in some place; now if particular places be not determined by man, what order can be expected in Gods Worship? But now, for such circumstances, as may be left at liberty without wrong to Gods Worship, and breach of order, I humbly conceive 'twill more then a little conduce to the peace of the Church, if they be so left.

As for religious Ceremonies, that depend meerly upon the arbitrary pleasure, and institution of man, these are matters of another nature. Let us for this present suppose them to be meer indifferencies, and thus much was acknowledged long ago, by the Church of *England* in the 34th. Article, which begins thus: *It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and changed according to the diversity of Countries, Times, and mens Manners, &c.* The same Article ends thus. *Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies, or rites of the Church, ordained only by mans authority, so that all things be done to edifying.* By this 'tis evident, that Ceremonies long ago were lookt upon by the Church of *England*, as meer indifferencies that might be chang'd or abolished without sin. For governors then, that

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are thus perswaded of them, to impose them with
 rigour upon such as think in conscience they are sin-
 ful, it seems to me a harshness of carriage, ill becom-
 ing the meekness of Wisdome.

But what do you talk of conscience, will some say :
 'Tis an easie matter to cover a peevish refractory hu-
 mour with a pretence of conscience. Let them
 look too't (say I,) that incur such a guilt. But for
 those that are real, put case that they be mistaken,
 and that Ceremonies are indifferent things, yet if they
 refuse them whilst in conscience they think them sin-
 ful, I cannot imagine but their plea will be much
 better at Christs tribunal, then their's who rigorously
 impose them, whilst they think them indifferent.
 If it be pleaded upon supposition of the indifferency of
 Ceremonies in themselves, that the injunctions of
 authority take away this indifferency, and make the
 omission of them to become a sin; according to this
 principle, there still rests a power in authority to a-
 bolish them; and withall, I hope I may say without
 presumption, it concerns authority to be very caute-
 lous how they make injunctions that may occasion
 sins, which would not be, were it not for those in-
 junctions; can any be offended with me for this, that
 considereth, how manifold the precepts and instituti-
 ons of Christ are: and how much the world groans
 under the weight of that guilt, that is contracted by
 not observing them:

And as for *peace*, I cannot imagine that ever the
 Church got so much by Ceremonies, as will pay for
 the peace it hath *lost* by them: I must confesse my
 self

self hard to be perswaded, that *England* would have had so much cause to complain of division and separation, that have rent and torn the Church into many pieces, had there not been so much ceremoniousness in former times. Not, that I justify separation upon this account, as will appear by that that followeth.

4. In the fourth place I take this to be another Dictate of Wisdome in order to Peace. *Separation is not to be made from a Church, upon any other ground, then that which makes a separation between God and that Church.* If any demand what that is, I answer, either the Apostasie of a Church into gross and right down *Idolary*, or in point of Doctrine, into *damnable Heresie*; either of these will cause a separation of God from a Church, and much more both of them.

But by all that I can learn by my Bible, we can be assured of nothing else. I readily acknowledg, that the Lord may be highly offended with a Church for other misdeedings. And a wanton *flattering* with him in matters of a lighter nature, may provoke him to give up a Church by degrees, till at last it falls into the degrees of grossest Apostasie. As the City of *Rome* was not built, so the Church of *Rome* did not fall in a day. Let us hear and fear, and not do presumptuously. But still I know nothing that proves the Lords divorcing from, and utter forsaking of a Church, till its Apostasie come to such a height as I have already mentioned. Now for any person willingly to separate, and refuse Commu-

nion with a Church, so long as God vouchsafes Communion; how this can be justified, or how it will be answered, I know not.

The Lords words, *Isaiah 52. 11.* (which with a small variation are cited by the Apostle, *2 Cor. 6. 17.*) *Come out from amongst them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.* 'Tis not unknown, how much these words have been abused for the encouragement of separation from the publick Assemblies of the Church of *England*. I say, abused, for who is it, but such as are forlornly void of all christian charity, that dare say concerning the hundred years past, that the Assemblies of the Church of *England* have had nothing of the Lords gracious presence with them? That Ordinances have been empty things, and the publick Ministry a meer sound of words? He that affirms this, bears false witness against thousands of glorified souls in Heaven, and gracious souls on Earth, who have found to their everlasting comfort, the presence of God in his Ordinances amongst us. Now suppose there have been miscarriages in the managment of Gods Worship, and Ordinances; yet if they be not such as drive God away, I see no reason why they should drive us away. And had the Lord ever intended (which cannot be imagined) to send any going, whilst he affordeth his own presence, *Come from amongst them*, would have been improper language, in such a case. It must have been, *Go from amongst them*, not, *Come*. As for *touching no unclean thing*, I grant it concerns us nearly in all times, and places;

places; as much as to say, we must beware of sin; and that not only by forbearing the acting of it, but likewise by taking heed, that we *partake not of other mens sins*. But now let us put the case, that our lot be cast in a Church, that hath its corruptions and miscarriages too much remarkable, whilst it holdeth to the substantialls of true Doctrine and Worship: Do any think that in this case, a person cannot hold Communion with such a Church without being accessary to its miscarriages, and incurring the guilt of its corruptions? I am clearly of another judgment. And am confirm'd in it by the practise of our Lord and Master, who was a Member of the Jewish Church, whilst it was corrupt enough in Doctrine, Worship, and Conversation. 'Tis true, he was far from owning its corruptions; he lamented and reprov'd them, and labour'd a redress, but still held Communion with it, as a member of it. And, I hope, none will say that in so doing he became accessary to the guilt of its corruptions.

And after his ascension; when he was about to write by his Amanuensis St. *John*, his Epistles to the seven Churches, he represents himself as walking amongst the seven Candlesticks. Some of them were sufficiently besmeared, but yet favour'd with Christs presence, and acknowledg'd for golden Candle sticks. He sharply reproves some of them for what was amiss, and severely threatneth them, if there were no amendment: But all this while, not the least blame laid upon any Member of those Churches, for not withdrawing or suspending their Com-

The best Wisdom.

Communion, Revel. 3. We find that the Church of *Sardis* had dirt enough in it to defile the Garments of all its Members, except a very few. *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their Garment, v. 4.* By this it appeareth, that these few were in actual Communion with that Church. Now, did their Communion, barely consider'd, render them accessory to the defilements of it? How then could our Saviour have truly said of them, that they had not defiled their Garments?

The like we may observe in *St. Paul* his dealings with the Church of *Corinth*; what sharp rebukes doth he give that Church for miscarriages, and that very notorious both in the matter of Gods Ordinances, and in point of conversation? 'Tis true, he would have every one lament what was amiss, and in his place endeavour a reformation; but where doth he hint the least encouragement to a separation? doth he not on the contrary severely reprove what ever tended to it? In a word, would any man take it well, to have a Plague-mark clapt upon his door, because of some uncleanness in his House? This is the usage that Christ meets withall; when any seperate from a Church as Antichristian; upon any grounds short of such gross Apostasie, as I mentioned in the beginning of this head.

5. Fifthly, another dictate of wisdom in order to Peace is this. *The interests of parties and private commitments must give place to publick Interest, 2 Tim. 3.* At the beginning, the Apostle in giving an account of the *Perilous Times* that were to come in the last dayes

dayes he begins with this, *men shall be lovers of themselves.* An inordinate, ravenous self-love, 'tis in the world an abomination making desolate; it throws firebrands, arrowes, and death. Such lovers of themselves, they must needs be covetous, they'll quickly appear without natural affection, true breakers, false accusers, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, and what not? what the Apostle saith of him that provides not for his Family, may it not fit that sort of men, that raise their Families by the ruines of the publick? *They have denyed the Faith, and are worse then Infidels.* And the World was ever too full of such cruel, *Hodmandods*, that care not though they suck a Commonwealth to death, so they fill their own shells with juice. Well might one say, That next to their repentance and reformation, the best that one can wish concerning this gang of men, is, that God would give them little wit, and less authority. All that are Sons of Peace may say, Amen to it.

In the natural body, had every Member a distinct appetite, alwayes coveting and drawing greedily to itself, what a strange confusion and tumult would there be in the body? It would be no wonder in such a case, to see one foot spurning, or one hand chopping off another: but one common appetite craving for the whole body, that so every Member may have its due proportion, this is it that keeps the members of the body in peace. The Application of this to Politick bodies is easily made, I shall leave it to you to do it. The Apostle *Paul* exhorting to love and

and unity. *Phil. 2. 2. Fulfil my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; and in the 3d. vers. Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory.* Now as an effectual means to further this, mark what followeth in the fourth verse: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.* Were but this well digested in the Nation, its work were more then three quarters done, as to the establishment of *Peace*. 'Tis base self-interest, and party interest, that undoeth our *Peace*.

Where shall we meet a *Moses*, who being largely proffered, if the Israelitish Nation were destroy'd, to become a great Nation himself, chose rather to be nothing, then to be made a great Nation upon such terms? *Exod. 32. 10, 11.* Where shall we find a true *Mordecai*, seeking the wealth of his People? *Ester 10. 3.* A *Nehemiah*, that left the pomp and pleasure of the greatest Princes Court then on Earth, and took a tedious and hazardous journey, that he might seek the welfare of the children of *Israel*, *Nehemiah 2. 10.* Where shall we find a *Namianzen*, that would not grutch *Fonas-like*, to be cast into the Sea, so that all might be calm in the publick? And if the heathen was as good as his words, when he said, *Ne immortalitatem contra Remp. acciperem*, I would not be hired with immortality to wrong the Common-wealth? How rare is it to find amongst Christians a man so bravely spirited? The Parliament-house filled with such spirited men, would be one of the rarest sights that could be seen in the English

lish Nation: And how quickly may a self-seeking Parliament lose its self and the Nation too?

6. Sixthly, Another dictate of Wisdom in order to peace, is this; *A malicious desire of revenge is so much beneath a Christian, that 'tis the baseness of a Man.* Doth any trespass against me? let him look to that; he hath the worst on't: thus much could a heathen say. *Vengeance is mine:* these are the Lords words, and alledg'd by the Appostle as a reason why we should not *avenge our selves*, Rom. 12. 19. Thou canst not execute a private revenge without wronging the Lord infinitely more then 'tis possible for any creature to wrong thee; for herein thou invadest one of Gods prerogatives, namely, *Vengeance*. The Lord vouches it as *his*; and in effect thou tellest him to his face, 'tis thine.

There is a proverb concerning the Lion; That he is not so fierce as men paint him. But as for this sin of malicious revenge, no tongue can paint it so foul as it is: I may well term it *profundam nequitiam*, one of the profoundest depths of *Satan*, that can be imagin'd to be in the heart of man. If we consider it abstractly in its naked self, we find the very quintessence of sin abounding in it. Would we take a true measure of the goodness or badness of actions, one of the surest rules we go by is, to observe how much there is of the Will in the Action; as doing more entirely and immediately with good or evil for its own sake. So far as credit and profit, and such like sensual necessities attending the practice of holiness and virtue, are influential upon the will to do it,

1 John 3.

so much is the action blended; there's so much the less of pure goodness in it. But now, when holiness stript of such accessaries obtains the consent and embrace of the will for the sake of its naked self, this argueth an eminent sincerity and heighth of Grace. It holds proportionably in evil habies and practises; and what is malice, but a meer ulcer or gangreen of a depraved will? It argues a person so much debauch'd into a greedy compliance with sin, that he swallows the bare hook. St. John tells us, *He that hateth his brother is a murderer*; and he that murders another meerly for evil wills sake, is worse in the sight of God, then he that doth it for moneys sake. And may it not be for a lamentation, that so cursed a thing should fill the hearts of so many as it doth?

Eph. 3.

1 Cor. 15. ult.

Were ye to deal with some in order to peace and reconciliation, ye would be ready to imagine that to be true of malice, which *Phaonius Illyricus* conceited of Original sin. That 'tis no accident or quality, but the very essence and substance of the man. You would find it as easy work to remove a mountain, as to remove a grudge out of some mens hearts. Instead of being rooted and grounded in Love, they are rooted and grounded in Malice; instead of being steadfast and unmoveable in Grace, always abounding in the work of the Lord, they are steadfast and unmoveable in wrath, as if they were under an oath to abound always in this work of the Devil. When *Nilus* overflows, it leaves a slime, in which some say *Cocodiles* breed; a malicious spirit of revenge is the *Cocodile* that hath brood in the slime of our

wars.

wars and troubles; the Lord send us well rid of it. Are there any that study more how to do an opposite party a mischief, then to further the publick good? Pray God keep such out of the Parliament! Should such a spirit as this be in the Parliament, 'twould be a hundred times worse then 36 barrells of gunpowder under it; I hope God will keep them clear of this. Where there is but the ingenuity of a well-bred Gentleman, I do not much fear it. To wrong the community for self-advantage sake, 'tis the spirit of a Wolf rather then a Christian; but to disturb peace for revenge sake, 'tis the spirit of a Devil, rather then a Gentleman. The Lord give the Parliament, Gentry and People of this Nation a holy spite in their hearts, against the sin of Malice.

7. Seventhly, Another dictate of Wisdome in order to Peace is this, *'Tis every mans duty to abide in the duties of his place and station, and the use of just and lawful means, and therein to wait upon God for events and issues.* The Apostles were once accused for preaching such Doctrine as this, *Let us do evil that good may come.* Rom. 3. 8. But see with what vehemency this is denied of St. Paul; *blasphemers.* We (saith he) be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, *Let us do evil that good may come.* And mark what followeth, *whose damnation is just.* Whether this be to be understood of them that rais'd this slander; or of them which held and practis'd this principle, 'tis hard to determine; but take it which way you will, it sufficiently argues the notorious villany of such a principle.

Had some in our times, been alive with their principles in *David's* time, how would they have laughed at him, for being so tender of *Saul's* life, when he had him at an advantage in the Cave? *Saul* was a bad man, a violent oppressor; and *David* had the Kingdom in his eye, and that justly; well, be it so; *David* will waite Gods time and way for *Saul's* remove, and his own settlement: He was in no such hast for a Kingdom, as to sin for it. Nor will wisdom from above onely teach us in our pursuits of good ends, to keep clear of such means and courses as are simply unlawfull, in all persons & at all times: It teacheth not only to keep clear of blood-guiltiness, by illegal proceedings against the lives of men that stand in our way; not only to abhor dispensing with Oathes lawfully taken, and such perfidious dealings, as the honest sort of heathens would blush to own, but will likewise teach us, that whilst we transgress the bounds of our stations, we become deeply guilty, even in such actions as are important duties, and precious fruits of righteousness in other men; as *Mozab* died for touching the Arke; had he been a Priest or a Levite, all had been well.

The good man in the first Psalm, *bringeth forth fruit*, not only good in general, but *his* fruit; *his*, as a man in such a calling and station. In books and writings the same words that make a learned Treatise, may be made monstrous nonsense, by false pointing; turning some words into one sentance, which properly belongs to another. The very Bible, should it be thus abus'd, might be made to speak blasphemy. Thus in societies of people, such actions as will make

a rare

a rare systeme and composition of Christianity, if rightly pointed and bounded, according to the rule that God hath given for the different stations and callings of men, there need no more to turn such actions in a destructive confusion, then meerly to misplace and jumble them together, whilst one man takes upon him the work that properly belong to another. Should a man study to mischief both himself and another, he could not find a readier way then this; Prov. 27. 8. *As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man from his place.* God had provided amongst the Jews; that a bird should not be hurt in her nest, but wandring she might quickly meet with a mischief. Thus 'tis with a man, he is never so safe as in his station and place; and alwayes in danger when out of it. And St. Paul, *1 Thes. 4. 11.* layeth a strict charge upon Christians, that they *do their own business*; and mark what goes along with this, *Study to be quiet*; saith the Apostle, and to *do your own business*.

Put case that men according to their principles and apprehensions of things, be possessed with thoughts that present affairs may tend to an *impure* settlement; do they think that hereupon they may raise tumults, and wage a war without the call and warrant of a lawfull Authority? The Lord bleis my soul from the guilt of such divinity. Do any disturb peace by unwarrantable wayes? let them not deceive themselves and think (though they propound the most pure ends) that the order of wisdoms properties in the text, *first* pure, and *then* peaceable, will bear them out. A man that attends the duty of his station, and thus
doing

13
The best Wisdom.

doing commits the events and issues of things to God; this is the man that behaveth himself as becommeth the Gospel of Christ. There have been too many principles abetted and practised, that plainly come to thus much, *That a good end sanctifies all kind of means*; The Lord deliver us from the mercy of such principles! they are *fire mingled with blood*.

I have done with the properties of wisdom considered in the *Matter* of them: I pass now to the *Order* of these properties.

As wisdom from above is *Pure and Peaceable*; so 'tis *first* Pure, and *then* Peaceable: These notes of order are of no light import: the word of God is such pure gold, that the least filings of it are more worth then both the Indies. The truth is, a Scripture particle, an *and*, a *wherefore*, or *therefore*, or as in the text a *first* and *then*, may afford more instruction, then a whole library of other writings. The notes of order used in the text, import two things.

1. That true wisdom in its pursuits of Purity and Peace, hath a *primary* respect to *Purity*: as much as it desireth *peace*, 'twill rather fall out with the whole World in discharge of duty, then offend God by the neglect of it. There is an *impure Peaceableness*; a courting of the worlds favour by unjust compliances, and ungodly companionship in sin: wisdom from above will have none of this. Satans Kingdom is not divided against it self; a multitude of Devils were so united in mischief, that they spake of themselves as if they were but one: Not *our* name, but *my* name is *Legion*,
for

for we are many, Mark. 3. 9. The wisdom that is Devilish in a fence may be peaceable; but far enough from being, *first Pure, then Peaceable.* Solomon tells us of *hand joyn'd to hand* in ways of Sin; but wisdom from above will rather chuse to have a hand cut off, then to shake hands upon such terms.

In this sence must *Luther* be understood, in an Epistle to *Erasmus*; *Inter cetera dona Christi hoc habes, quod multis displices*; amongst other gifts and favors of God towards you, this is one, that you have the heart to displease many. I am faith *Jeremiah*, a man of contention to the whole Earth. Jer. 15. 10. He had no doubt the wisdom from above that is peaceable, and yet a man of contention. The thing was this; he could not be at peace with men, unless he fell out with God. Jam. 4. 4. *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?* That is, such friendship as justleth out *Purity*: For a Minister and his people to live peaceably, is a most desireable blessing to both: But put case a Minister, to gain favour with the Gentlemen of the place, and quiet life amongst his neighbours, should be partial in Gods Law, and not deal plainly with the souls and consciences of his People, 'twere infinitely better for such a Minister, that he had been born without a tongue in his head; or brought up to sweep Chimneys, or scrape Trenchers. Wisdom from above will teach a Minister, *Jeremiah*-like, to be a man of contention to Town and Country, rather then to be peaceable upon such termes. And should men

men invested with authority, and put into places of publick trust, to gain the affections of their neighbours, or the good will of a party, dissemble their consciences in the neglect of their duty: though this may pass with some for wisdom, 'twill one day be found such wisdom as never came from *above*; and if men be not aware of it, it may carry them thither, from whence it came. And as for that wisdom, that pleads for a full an unlimited Toleration in Religion, were it as *peaceable* as it pretends to be, yet would it pose me to find, how it can be *first pure*, and *then peaceable*.

2. Secondly, As wisdom from above in its pursuits of Purity and Peace, hath a *primary* respect to Purity, as the *best* of the two, so, it judgeth of *Purity* as the *best means* for the obtainment of desirable *peace*, and persweth it to that end. And this I take to be another thing intended by these notes of order, *first Pure, then Peaceable*. In Christs Sermon upon the Mount, the *Peacemakers* immediately follow the *pure in heart*. Were not the Gospel of Christ a Gospel of purity, 'twould not be a Gospel of Peace. That promise, Mich. 4. 3. *They shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, &c.* *Hic spectanda est mensura profectus Evangelii*, saith Calvin upon the place, 'tis to be understood in proportion to the progress and effect of the Gospel: Look in what proportion it obtaineth upon the hearts, and gets Mastery over the lusts of men, in the same proportion it will be an effectual means of peace. An excellent and safe rule for the under-

understanding of this, and the like passages in the Prophets. The Apostle telleth us that the Gospel teacheth, *That denying of ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.* Were but this lesson of the Gospel well learn'd and practis'd, what a quiet world would this present world be?

That Philosophical opinion, That the whole world is informed and animated by one universal Physical soul, I apprehend it a meer fancy; but that *ordo est forma mundi*, that order in a moral sence is the form and soul of the World, there's nothing more real. Now what is it that ruffleth the Creation, and puts all things out of course and order, but sin; what is it but sin, that sets the world together by the ears? Sin is a meer violence, it had certainly run the world off its legs long ago, had not the Lord clapt some chains of restraint upon this mad bedlam. Some would fain make the disorder of the world an Argument for their Atheisme, but 'tis to me no slender Argument of a Deity and a Divine Providence, that there is so much order and constancy, in a world that *lyeth in so much wickedness*. As for the trouble that falleth upon the world, if it be thank-worthy, we ^{1 John 5.} may thank that for it, that the greatest part of the world love most, and that is sin; were there nothing of holiness for sin to quarrel at, it could not long agree with it self. *Scelera dissident*, saith *Seneca*; and *lusts are divers*, saith the Apostle; when ambitious ^{Tit. 3. 2.} and worldly-designing men enter a confederacy, 'tis but a *fooling*, in order to a *falling out*. Ungodly, lust-

ful Interests may for a while travel together very peaceably, but it cannot possibly belong before they part. And observe it when you will, instead of shaking of hands, you shall find drawing of Swords as such a parting. *Wickedness*, saith the Prophet, *it burneth like a fire*, Isa. 9. 18. It setteth Nations, Cities, Towns and Families on fire.

In this juncture of Time, some fear one thing, and some another; for my part, I am more afraid of sin, least that should ruine us, then of all the world beside. Give me leave to describe the true Malignant; He's the greatest Malignant this day in *England*, that is the most notorious God-provoking sinner in it, when a people wearied with Wars and Troubles, begin to think of following *Peace*, but still without *Holiness*, they may follow it till their hearts ake, but are never like to overtake it. Do we bless our selves in unholy and unjust wayes, and say, *we shall have Peace*? We had as good say, we are resolv'd we will have Peace, whether God will or no. 'Tis the fruit of *righteousness*, that is *sown in Peace*, of them that make Peace. *Jam. 3. 18.* the verse immediately following my Text. The real purity and power of Religion, so far as it obtaineth, it harmonizeth the world, keeping every man in his rank and file, and sweetly bindeth him to his good behaviour towards God and man. *Calvin* in one of his Epistles mentioneth a Letter that he received from a Prince to this purpose: That Religion, and mens zeal for it, and forwardness in it, was the main thing that put Nations and Kingdomes into confusion and disorder.

The

The World affordeth too many that are like minded;
 But the Lord send *England* Princes and Parliaments
 better informed and perswaded concerning Reli-
 gion. Let all that love *Englands* Peace, say, A-
 men.

I pass now to Application, in which I must be
 brief; what I have prepared, was intended for the
 solemn business of yesterday: I call it solemn, the
 chusing of Parliament-men being at any time *one*
of the things of Englands Peace: But if ever the
 Nation were concerned in a Parliament, it is like to
 be in this; if once it sits, ye may tearm the time of
 its Session, *the critical day of England*. What the
 hurts and bruises of the Nation have been, I need
 not tell ye: there is humane likelihood enough, as to
 this Parliament, that the Nation may either *mend*
by it, or end with it.

What I intended to speak to the Country, in re-
 ference to the choice they were to make, I must
 omit it, as being now out of date: it remains only,
 that I commend my Text, as an excellent Compa-
 nion and Counsellor, to such worthy Gentlemen
 as are the choice, whether of the County, or of
 Incorporations, to sit in Parliament, as the Heads of
 their Tribes, the Trustees of God and their Coun-
 try.

And first of all, *Honoured Sirs*, I cannot but
 thankfully acknowledg the Lords Mercies both to-
 wards ye and us, that such an opportunity of service
 is put into your hands; what would ye and we have
 given many times over, within this half year, for such

an overture? And I beseech ye, bestow some serious thoughts upon what is past; think upon the violations of Parliaments, the Catastrophes of Noble Families, the picks, and perils that the Nation hath gone through: and then tell me, if the Exhortation of the Psalmist, to *wisdome from above*, be not seasonable for ye; *Be wise and instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled.* Be wise for God, and we shall hope, if not be confident, that God will honour ye in doing us good by ye; but shall ye neglect the *wisdome that is from above*, ye may quickly fall low enough, and the whole Nation with ye.

For the Lord's sake study, and practise *the wisdome that is pure*; this will make your eyes to be, like Davids, upon them that are faithful in the Land; one of the great advantages, that the Devil hath made, of politick and juggling pretences to godliness, hath been to render real godliness, and godly men odious to the world: The Lord give them repentance, *by whom the offence come*, and keep you from the woe of them that take the offence. Remember, it hath been a time of exquisite temptation: the ingenuiry of a Gentleman, and much more the charity of a Christian, may well suggest thoughts, that some that belong to God, and are dear to him, have been sadly miscarried, in the simplicity of their hearts by others more crafty then themselves; shew all possible kindness to such, that will consist with Peace and order in Church.

Church and State, and I am confident to say, That the God of heaven will take it kindly at your hands.

Remember what I have told ye concerning Religion, that Magistrates, by the Ordinance of God, are appointed to the vindication and guardianship of it. Let the concernments of it, have the pre-eminence in your aimes and actions; every person among us is made up of soul and body; now though the Law of God, and Nature, obligeth to a care of both, yet the excellency of the Soul requires the chief care: and *what will it advantage a man, if he get the whole world, and loose his soul?* Thus is the publick Interest of Nations, that own Christianity, compounded as it were of soul and body, of religious and civil Interests: A true publick spirit will have an eye at both, but more especially at the Interest of the Gospel, and Religion; let him go like an Atheist as he is, that thinks not this, the life and soul of the body politick. We may well say, What wil it advantage us, should we gain the Lordship of both the ~~Judges~~ *Judges*, and have the whole world at our command, if we loose the Soul of our Nation, the soul of our publick welfare?

Let it be seen, Honoured Patriots, that the precious concernments of Religion, purity of Doctrine, and purity of worship, are truly precious in your eyes. As for Government in the Church, I am as far from presuming punctually to prescribe, as such a presumption would be from becoming me: thus much I say, A tender regard to such a Government

in the Church, as will most conduce to purity of Doctrine, in the encouragement of a learned and faithful Ministry, and suppression of Heresie, and to purity of worship, in the prevention of superstition, I could heartily afford to beg it of every Parliament-man, upon my bended knees, for the Lord's sake.

And let not second Table purity be left out; do justly, and love mercy, or ye do nothing. As for particular cases, that may nearly concern the civil state of the Nation, the mention of them will be fitter for a Parliament, than a Pulpit: This only I shall say, as ye are intrusted for the whole Nation, so it behooveth ye, in all good and righteous wayes, to take care for the body of it, *from head to foot*, how glad a people should we be, to see judgment, that hath sprung up as hemlock, at length to return to righteousness; and where ye find the vowes and oaths of God upon the Nation, let the world see that ye are men that fear an oath.

In a word, be pure, and no great fear but ye will be peaceable; did I know, that any of ye would so much as offer to dream of Peace, in contrary wayes, and upon other terms: I should make bold, as a messenger of God to say, *What have ye to do with Peace?* and to tell ye, that my God saith, *there is no Peace to the wicked.* Unless the God of Heaven layes aside his pure nature, or be shortned in the power of his wrath, what Peace can be expected in impure wayes? I have already hinted concerning sin, that should the Lord leave it to it self, and not follow it with

with any other punishment, then what is the genuine off-spring and product of it, we should find it as natural for sin to breed disturbance and trouble, as for a Dunghill to breed Nettles and Vermine: In the times of our late troubles, whence came the Wars and strifes of the Nation, but from the lusts of men? whence came the beginning of latter separations, but from former superstitions? and whence came the zealous inclinations of many to old superstitions, but from the miserable effects of late separations? and should God punish us with a *Parliament* that would cherish these inclinations, what could be expected, but more separations? and thus one extrem, by a most unhappy *antiperistasis*, would beget another in *infinitum*.

And may I take the boldness to speak freely, I cannot but tell ye, that I find a great deal of liberty taken by some, to suspect that this is the time in which we are like to return to our old extremities. I hope better things, things that accompany moderation, and the peace of the Church. I am not unsensible, that worthy Gentlemen may meet with tempters and temptations enough, to court them to a zealous love of Ceremonies, by the plausible mention of the *Fathers*, and the ancient Church; so far am I from reflecting disparagement upon them, that I really account the Histories we have of the ancient Church, and the Writings of the Fathers, one of the richest treasures of the Christian World. And a rare accomplishment it is, not only for a Divine, but for a Christian Gentleman, to be well studied.

died in them; a great deal of excellent instruction they afford not only in matters of Doctrine, and Conversation, but likewise concerning the prudent management of Church affairs, witness that rare Tractate of *Vedelius; de prudentia veteris Ecclesie*. But to take them up as a determining rule, in matters of Doctrine or Worship, this is plainly to set them as a *check-mate to the Bible*. It is true, the Fathers are ignorant of us; but could they see us in such an action, and speak to us from Heaven, they would say as the Angels to *John*, *We are your fellow servants, why do ye worship us?*

And as I think it unreasonable in them, that slight almost every thing in God's Worship that is not new; so on the other hand I cannot assent to them that will take up any thing, meerly because it is ancient; if truth and error be compared, I readily grant, that truth is the most ancient: But who can say, that truth is of one whole dayes longer standing in the world than error? and doth not *St. Paul* say of his time, *I the mystery of iniquity doth already work?* Don't we read of several carnages of divers Churches, even in the Apostles time, that were far from being apostolical? Had the carnage of the Church of Corinth, about the Communion, been brought to our knowledge any other way but by Scripture, and without the rebuke of the Apostle, some, no doubt, would have thought it a great impiety not to have imitated the practise of a Church so ancient. Nor is it inconsiderable in this matter, that we have so uncertain and imperfect notice of the customes and practices

of the Church, for the first good years after
Christ, and especially of the times, that more im-
mediately succeeded the Apostolical age. As if the
Lord foreseeing an abuse, resolved by such a pro-
vidence to season all us, that we cleave the clove to
our Bibles.

And for the multitude of Ceremonies that were
in St. Austin's time, they that will please to read
his 119 Epistle, may find his thoughts of them, and
what complaint he makes of the burden that lay up-
on the Church by such means. That I may not
be thought to wrong him, I shall give you some of his
words.

All such things as are neither autho-
rised by holy Scripture, nor found to be
the injunctions of the Councils of the
Bishops, nor are confirmed by the cus-
tome and practice of the universal
Church; but are varied according to
the divers manners of divers places, so
that the number of their institution can
scarcely be found out. I am not at all
doubtful, but that they are to be aboli-
shed by authority, if there be opportunity
for it.

By the Councils of the Bishops, I humbly con-
ceive, the Father intends only such as were general,
and Oecumenical, and not particular Councils, con-
vened upon the account of some particular Church
or Churches. This I collect from that which fol-
lows, concerning the confirmation that he speaks

Omnia itaque talia, quæ neque
sanctorum Scripturarum autori-
tate continentur, nec in con-
siliis, Episcoporum Statuta inve-
niuntur, nec consuetudine Uni-
versæ Ecclesiæ roborata sunt;
sed diversarum locorum, diversis
moris innumerabiliter varian-
tibus, ita aut vitæ, aut omnino nun-
quam inveniri possint causæ,
quæ in eis instituenda, homi-
nes sequuntur, sunt; ubi facultas
tribuet, hæc omni dubitatione
relicta existimo.

of, by the custom and practice of the Universal Church, which comprises the whole body of the Christian Church, in the several ages and places of its being. Now whether there be any religious Rites thus enjoyed for Gods worship by the concurring votes of Oecumenical Councils, and thus confirmed by the customs and practice of the Universal Church, but what are likewise warranted by the authority of the holy Scripture, I leave it to consideration: The Church of England long since affirmed the negative in a passage before cited out of the 34 Article: where it is plainly declared that Traditions and Ceremonies meerly Ecclesiastical, have at all times been divers, and changed, according to the diversity of Countries, Times, and Mens manners.

Now for ceremonies of this nature, let but Austins judgement *sine omni dubitatione rescanda existimo* take place, and the controversy is at an end.

But to follow the Father, who concerning Ceremonies proceeds thus.

Quamvis enim nec hos haberi possit commodis contra fidem sine ipsam mentem religio nem: quam plurimum de humanissimis celebrationum sacramentis misericordia Dei esse liberam voluit, servilibus oneribus premunt. In hoc autem sit conditio Judaeorum, qui etiam si tempus libertatis non agnoverint, legibus tamen facinoris non humanis presumptionibus subjiciuntur.

Though it cannot be found how they are contrary to the faith, for Religion, which the mercy of God would have at freedom, with very few and very manifest religious Rites in the celebrations of it, this they load with such servile burdens, that the condition of the Jews may be lookt upon as more tolerable, for though the Jews understand not the time of their liberty, yet they are subjected to such heavy carriages as were of legal appointment, and not to humane presumptions.

And

And last by the way, *Bellarmino* is rational to no purpose, he would have us believe, that *Austin* aims at such Ceremonies as were practised by private persons, and especially women, without the warrant of Ecclesiastical Authority. I marvel what coloured Spectacles *Bellarmino* used, whilst he read *Austin*'s words to such a sense: Is it not plain enough, that the Father speaks of such Ceremonies as oppressed Religion, and made it subject to humane presumptions: and doth he not plainly compare these burdens, with the heavy carriages that lay upon the back of the Jewish Church: and were not these publick, and not private Ceremonies?

As for what the Father saith concerning very few, and very manifest Religious Rites or Ceremonies, which God would have used in the Celebrations of Religion, I freely assent to it: What are the Sacramental elements and actions in Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, but Sacred Ceremonies? These are Christ's appointments, and with all reverence to be attended; and concerning these, there hath ever been the harmonious concurrence of general Councils in the true Christian Church, to provide for their due observation: and the universal Church in all times and places, hath commended them to us by its practice. But *Austin* proceeds yet further, in such words as these, *The Church of God, among a great deal of chaff and cockle, tolerateth many constitutions, whilst it approves not of, nor committeth*

Sed Ecclesia Dei inter multam paleam, multaque zizania, con-

stitutis multa tolerat: & tamen quas non approbat, nec committit.

-quid

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at

at anything that *our Church* hath, as a *Country*
to *agree* it. If *Commons* that were not in the
Church in *former* time, were not the things that
he intends by *Church* and *Catholic*, it is very manifest
self unable to understand him.

But to say no more in this matter, I shall be
any more humane ceremony contended for upon the
account of the authority of any of the Fathers, or
the practice of the ancient Church, I humbly con-
ceive, I may without presumption undertake to pro-
duce some other thing every whit as ancient, which I
take for granted, that all of us would be unwilling
with; but if any desired to be further resolved in
the truth concerning the authority of the Ancients,
let them read the truly learned treatise of *Daille* a
French Divine, concerning the right use of the *Fa-
thers*; you will find that Author a true reverencer of
them, and thoroughly acquainted with their writings.
The proper intent of his work is to prove, that the
Authority of the Fathers is not decisive in points of
controverted Doctrine, but if we weigh his Argu-
ments with reflections upon the matter of worship,
we shall find them for the most part not beside the
purpose for which I mentioned him.

But no longer to presume upon your patience,
that which hath been spoken in order to the purity
of Divine Worship, my aim in it I hope hath been
at the Honour of God, and the peace of the Church.
England hath tried extremes already, and hath felt
to some purpose the mischiefs that have attended
them: 'tis not a politick, but (if I mistake not) a

scriptural moderation that hath been pleaded for;
I am encouraged to hope that it will find acceptance
as a word in season. The Lord give us a right un-
derstanding in all things, and teach our Senators such
Wildome, as is *first pure, then peaceable,*

F I N I S.
